

LETTER OF GUNNER CHARLES MORGAN, U. S. N.

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,

TRANSMITTING,

IN RESPONSE TO RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE OF FEBRUARY 28, 1901, COPIES OF THE LETTER OF GUNNER CHARLES MORGAN, U. S. N., WITH INDORSEMENTS THEREON OF REAR-ADMIRAL W. T. SAMPSON, U. S. N., TOGETHER WITH THE CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE SAME.

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MARCH 2, 1901.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

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NAVY DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington, March 2, 1901.*

SIR: Replying to the resolution of the Senate, dated the 28th ultimo, I have the honor to inclose herewith copies of the following communications, namely:

Letter of Gunner Charles Morgan, U. S. N., dated February 13, 1901, with indorsements thereon of Rear-Admiral W. T. Sampson, U. S. N., commandant, navy-yard, Boston, Mass., dated February 14, 1901, and of the Secretary of the Navy, without date; letters of Rear-Admiral Sampson, U. S. N., dated February 25 and February 28, and the letter of the Secretary of the Navy dated February 26.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully,

JOHN D. LONG, *Secretary.*

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE.

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UNITED STATES TORPEDO STATION,  
*Newport, R. I., February 13, 1901.*

DEAR SIR: The new bill whereby six gunners are to be commissioned ensigns tempts me to write to you, trusting you will pardon the liberty I take in so doing. As I served on the flagship *New York* during your command of the fleet, you will know if my abilities, whatever they may be, are of sufficient merit to warrant my filling the position of

ensign. I will say here that I never use tobacco or liquor in any form. If in your estimation I am worthy of this position, I shall be most grateful to you if you will recommend me to the Department.

I am, very respectfully, yours,

CHAS. MORGAN,  
*Gunner, U. S. N.*

Admiral WM. T. SAMPSON, U. S. N.

[First indorsement.]

NAVY-YARD, BOSTON, MASS., *February 14, 1901.*

1. Respectfully forwarded to the Navy Department for its consideration.

2. Mr. Morgan has good professional ability, and he also has, which distinguishes him from most other warrant officers, a gentlemanly bearing. If he were to be commissioned as an ensign, he probably would compare favorably, both professionally and in personal conduct and learning, with other officers of that grade as far as his technical education would permit.

3. It is earnestly to be hoped, however, that the Secretary of the Navy will not find it necessary to take advantage of the authority which I understand is to be granted him to appoint a certain number of warrant officers to the grade of ensign. While it is true that these men are selected from a large class on account of their unusual ability, which distinguishes them as perhaps the professional equals of other officers as far as their technical education extends, it is also true that they are recruited from a class of men who have not had the social advantages that are requisite for a commissioned officer. It is submitted that in time of peace the Navy's function consists, to a certain extent, of representing this country abroad, and it is important that the Navy's representatives should be men of at least refinement. While there are, perhaps, a certain few among the warrant officers who could fulfill this requirement, I am of the opinion that the vast majority of them could not. Once they are commissioned, they will have precisely the same social standing as other officers, and no distinction properly could be made in extending general invitations. The consequences that would arise from their acceptance might not redound to the credit of the Navy or the country which the Navy represents. I do not mean to detract from the sterling worth of the warrant officers of the Navy; I merely mean to suggest to the Department that, unfortunately for them, they have been deprived of certain natural advantages, and, in consequence, their proper place is that of leading men among the crew, and not as representatives of the country in the ward room and steerage.

4. I request that this may be brought to the personal attention of the Secretary of the Navy.

W. T. SAMPSON,  
*Rear-Admiral, U. S. N., Commandant.*

[Second indorsement.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *February 23, 1901.*

Application for appointment as ensign in the Navy in the event of the passage of the bill to authorize the appointment of noncommissioned officers to that grade.

Referring to the second paragraph of Admiral Sampson's indorsement, the Bureau of Navigation will give Gunner Morgan an opportunity to compete for a commission as ensign in case the necessary provision in the naval appropriation bill now pending shall become law, and in case he meets the requirements thereof.

LONG, *Secretary.*

No. 40.]

UNITED STATES NAVY-YARD,  
*Boston, Mass., February 25, 1901.*

SIR: I have the honor to report that a recent letter of Gunner Morgan, addressed to me, and my indorsement thereon, dated February 14, appeared verbatim in the morning edition of the Boston Globe of even date; and submit that, unless this was done by the authority of the Department, article 252 of the United States Navy Regulations has been violated.

Very respectfully,

W. T. SAMPSON,  
*Rear Admiral, U. S. N., Commandant.*

The SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,  
*Washington, D. C.*

NAVY DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington, February 26, 1901.*

SIR: Replying to your letter of February 25, the publication of your letter of the 14th was without the authority or knowledge of this Department. You will at once give the Department all the information you have in the matter, and also state whether you gave Gunner Morgan or anyone else a copy of your indorsement, or permitted any person or persons to see it, and if so, give the name or names.

Very respectfully,

JOHN D. LONG.

Rear-Admiral W. T. SAMPSON, U. S. N.,  
*Commandant Navy-Yard, Boston, Mass.*

No. 42.]

UNITED STATES NAVY-YARD,  
*Boston, Mass., February 28, 1901.*

SIR: Replying to the Department's letter of February 26, I have to state that I did not give Gunner Morgan or anyone else a copy of my indorsement, nor did I permit any person to see it except those persons employed in the preparation of official correspondence in this office.

2. After having received my instructions in regard to the contents of the indorsement, my aide, Lieut. E. L. Bennett, dictated the indorsement to the second clerk, Mr. P. F. Walsh. The indorsement was then submitted to me for signature, and was then sent, with the original letter, through the mail clerk, Mr. Arthur F. Macey, to be press-copied; the latter then mailed the correspondence. This is the usual routine with official correspondence, of which the indorsement under discussion was considered to be a part.

3. Both the letter and the indorsement were copied in the official press copy book, and in this shape were accessible to the following persons, in addition to the above named: Chief Clerk John W. Hudson and Messenger Charles J. Thornton. The only other inmates of this office are Sergt. Egbert W. Thomas, U. S. M. C., and John Johnson, fireman, second class. It would be possible for either of these two to consult the press copy book before any of the clerical force arrived in the morning. It is unlikely, however, that either of these two knew that the letter or indorsement were in existence.

4. All the above-mentioned people have been questioned, and all deny emphatically that they were responsible in any way for the publication of the indorsement. I have to add that I am in no way responsible for its publication.

Very respectfully,

W. T. SAMPSON,

*Rear-Admiral, U. S. N., Commandant.*

The SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,

*Washington, D. C.*

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